

Wall Street International

ART

Hammersmith Poem and Love Letters to Kazimir Malevich

27 Oct — 25 Nov 2017 at Cob Gallery in London, United Kingdom

25 OCTOBER 2017



Artwork by Robert Montgomery

Montgomery distills a unique mysticism in his works that communicates wider social messaging- bridging a gap between a search for genuine spiritual feeling and an updated 'Beuysian' conceptual art practice of social sculpture. His poetic voice seeks to connect the audience directly to political, social and ecological priorities as a result of their interaction with his work.

For the exhibition, Montgomery has deepened a dialogue with early Modernism in a series of paintings that set his texts overlaid on the composition structures or "ghost outlines" of a number of Malevich paintings. Motifs of the Suprematist movement appear as laid foundations to Montgomery's poetical cautions on political, social, and ecological concerns of 21st Century society.

Relating the paintings directly to his public works, the texts echo the words from Montgomery's Hammersmith Poem - unveiled in early 2017 as a monumental four panelled installation wrapping a glass atrium under the Hammersmith Town Hall - a paragon of Brutalist architecture. The poem appeared in four parts, arranged as a cubed sculpture in-the-round and formalistically referenced to Kazimir Malevich's four black square paintings made between 1915 and 1930.

In Hammersmith Poem, Modernism is reframed as both a social project of civic funding of healthcare, education and libraries and an intellectual project of progress and equality. Montgomery believes that the rise of 'Reaganomics' and neo-liberalism since the 1980s has caused the dismantling of civic investment resulting in a kind of voluntary 'un-Modernising' of Britain, seen in the harsh realities of a vast increase in inequality in our society.

The exhibition poignantly argues that Modernism is an unfinished social project and that a restatement of its ideals of education, freedom and equality are urgently needed again at the beginning of the 21st Century, just as they were at the beginning of the 20th century.

Known for his large-scale sculptural light works, this Cob Gallery exhibition coincides with Montgomery's commission at Parasol Unit for its ongoing series of Parasolstice – Winter Light projects. Each year, Parasol Unit commissions an international artist to create a sculptural work that addresses the phenomenon of light. "Hammersmith Poem takes Malevich's black square into the city and turns it into street art with an ecstatic vision of Modernism. I'm proposing a wilder, more mystical and more political vision of Modernism than the academic version we are used to and that is the point of this series. We are in desperate need of a new vision of Modernism that has ecology and public education and public healthcare and equality and kindness, and indeed ecstatic joy and peace at its heart. And we need this new Modernism again to fight the forces of Trump and religious fundamentalism and all the anti-modern forces that are rising again in the world." This exhibition has been kindly sponsored by Joseph. An exhibition of Montgomery's works at Joseph, Savile Row will coincide the Cob Gallery exhibition and include an evening with the artist in conversation with Tate curator Fiontan Moran Wednesday 8th November.